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Secretary Salazar Announces more than \$30 Million for Wetlands Grants for Migratory Waterfowl *Washington State Receives \$150 Thousand for Two Projects*

Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar announced yesterday that the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission (MBCC) has approved \$30.4 million in federal funding to conserve more than 402,000 acres of wetlands and associated habitats in Canada, Mexico, and the United States under the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA).

“The needs of waterfowl and wetland-dependent wildlife are no less great during these hard economic times,” said Salazar. “The efficiency and effectiveness of our wetland conservation system is especially important, thanks in large part to North American Wetlands Conservation Act grants, the Federal Duck Stamp and the National Wildlife Refuge System.”

Wetlands provide many ecological, economic, and social benefits. They provide habitat for fish, wildlife, and a variety of plants. Wetlands are nurseries for many saltwater and freshwater fishes and shellfish of commercial and recreational importance. Wetlands hold and slowly release flood waters, act as filters to cleanse water of impurities, and provide recreation and wildlife viewing opportunities for millions of people.

The Commission also acknowledged the use of \$3,089,753 to fund 46 projects under the NAWCA U.S. Small Grants program. These projects will restore, enhance, or protect more than 13,696 acres in 25 states. Partners will also contribute more than \$10 million in matching funds.

Pacific Region Grants include:

Samish River Riparian and Wetland Protection (Phase 1): Located in Whatcom County in the Pacific Flyway. **Grantee:** Whatcom Land Trust; **Grant:** \$75,000; **Matching Funds:** \$108,600

Whatcom Land Trust will expand its existing preserve by acquiring fee title to 25 acres to protect wetland and riparian habitat along the Samish River that supports migratory and resident bird populations, waterfowl and

fish. This project is part of a larger coordinated and phased effort to implement protection and enhancement of critical habitat links. Subsequent phases will implement restoration and enhancement projects with partners. Whatcom Land Trust will work with adjacent private landowners to protect wildlife habitat and water quality with conservation easements within the Samish River watershed. Species that will benefit include Canada geese, mallards, wood ducks, marsh wrens and willow flycatchers.

Snowden Wetlands Sandhill Crane Habitat Enhancement: Located in Klickitat County in the Pacific Flyway. **Grantee:** Columbia Gorge Ecology Institute **Grant:** \$75,000 **Matching Funds:** \$154,000.

Partners: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife; private individuals; Klickitat Birders; volunteers and school groups; International Crane Foundation; Oregon Zoo Foundation; Real Ecology; Roseland Corporation; Underwood Conservation District; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Felbourn Foundation; Hood River Law.

The Snowden Wetlands Sandhill Crane Restoration Project will enhance 52 acres of emergent riparian wetland habitat and 13 acres of forested riparian wetlands to attract breeding waterfowl and sandhill cranes. This project will restore natural hydrology to the restored wetland, extending surface water availability throughout the waterfowl and water bird breeding season; enhance the forested riparian wetlands by replanting native species; remove exotic vegetation and plant native wetland vegetation; and monitor the success of the project. Species that will benefit from this project include mallards; lesser scaup, greater white-fronted goose, sandhill crane, northern harrier, rufous hummingbird, Lewis's woodpecker and red-breasted sapsucker.

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the 1934 amendment to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act that created the Federal Duck Stamp. For every dollar spent on Federal Duck Stamps, ninety-eight cents goes directly to purchase vital habitat for protection in the National Wildlife Refuge System. The Migratory Bird Conservation Commission oversees the use of Federal Duck Stamp funds for the purchase and lease of these wetland habitats for national wildlife refuges. To date, more than 5 million acres of wetlands have been purchased using more than \$700 million in Duck Stamp revenue.

More information about NAWCA grant programs and the NAWCA projects approved today is available on the Web at: <http://www.fws.gov/birdhabitat/Grants/NAWCA/index.shtm>

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit **www.fws.gov**.

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